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26 November 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

State Department review
completed

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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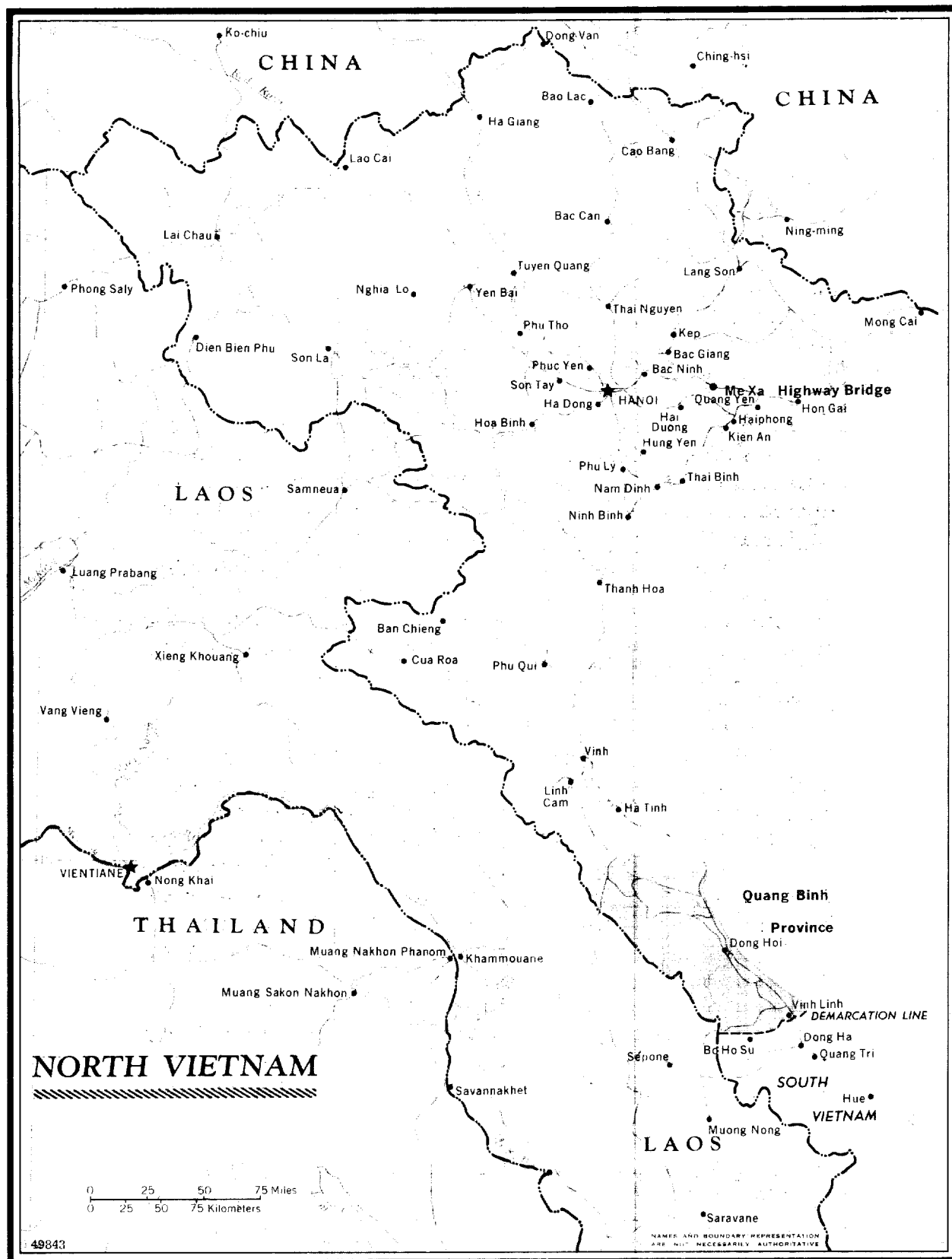
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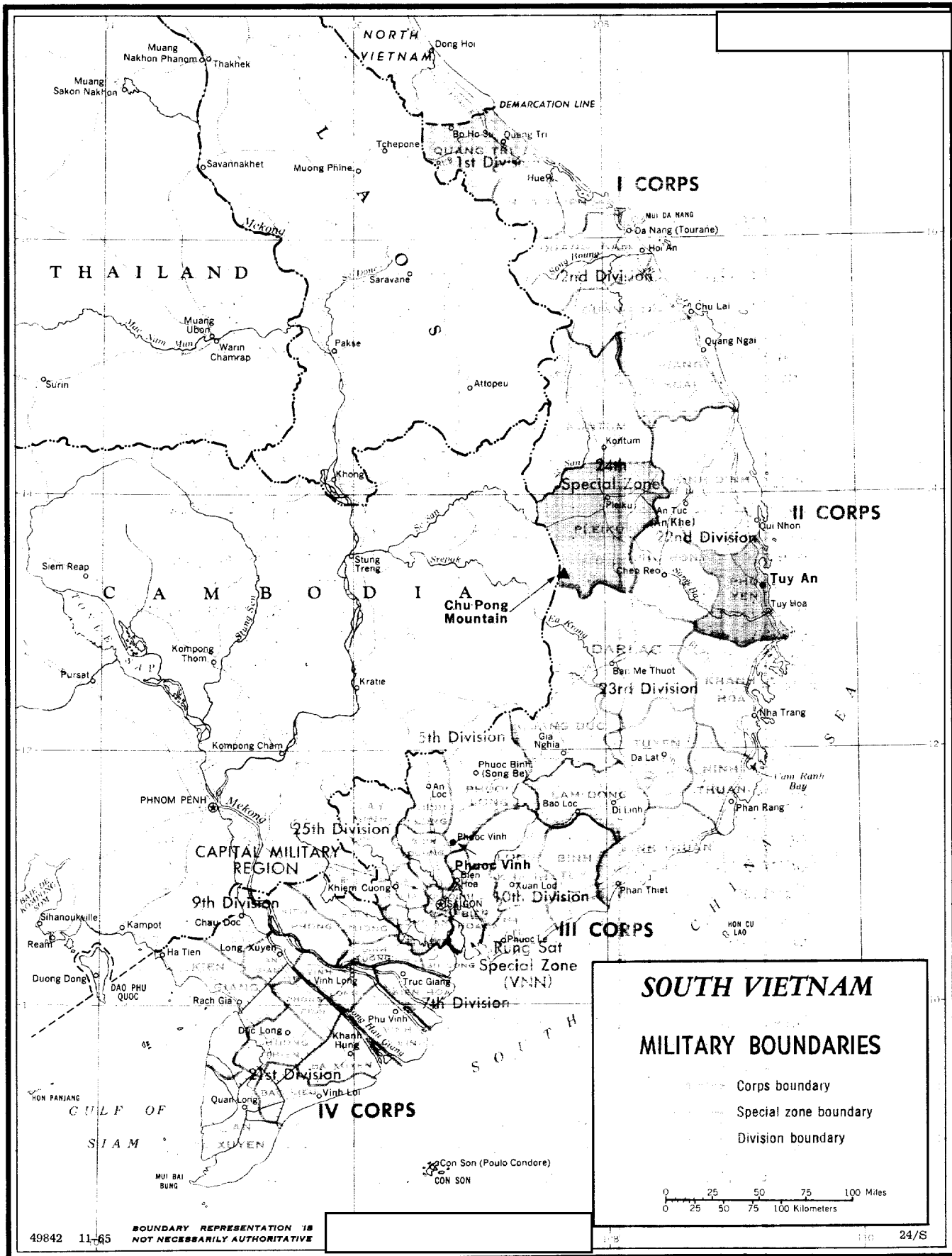
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

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In other developments, North Vietnamese MIG fighters unsuccessfully engaged US Navy aircraft conducting a strike on the Me Xa highway bridge, some 39 miles east of Hanoi. Three enemy fighters were involved in firing runs against the Navy aircraft and pilots reported seeing one air-to-air rocket fired from one of the MIGs. No damage was inflicted on the MIGs. This is the first time in several months that MIG fighters have attempted to engage armed US fighter aircraft.

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Only light ground fighting has been reported in South Vietnam during the past two days. However, three battalions of government troops ended a two-day operation in northernmost Quang Tri Province with losses of five dead and four wounded as against 60 Viet Cong killed.

Early yesterday, a battalion of the US First Infantry Division clashed with an unknown number of Viet Cong near Phuoc Vinh, about 30 miles northeast of Saigon. US troops suffered losses of four killed and eight wounded; Communist casualties are unknown.

No new action has been reported in coastal Phu Yen Province where elements of a Communist regiment on 23 November had encircled the district town of Tuy An, broke contact and withdrew.

US First Cavalry and South Vietnamese airborne troops, continuing search-and-destroy operations against an estimated three to four PAVN regiments in the Chu Pong mountain area of southwestern Pleiku Province, have reported no significant new contacts.

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(continued)

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Political Developments in South Vietnam: The US Embassy reports that, for a variety of reasons, the cohesiveness and performance of the "economic bloc" in the Ky cabinet has declined, and the group is under increasing attack from both within and without the government. Premier Ky, who is in need of strong economic advice, appears to be vacillating in his support of these ministers. As the country's economic problems become more severe, this situation in the cabinet may have an increasing impact on the government's strength and on US programs of assistance.

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Congo (Leopoldville): The country is calm in the wake of President Kasavubu's ouster by army chief Mobutu.

Mobutu, disgusted at the antics of Leopoldville politicians, installed himself as president on 25 November and announced he would serve a full five-year term. He directed Colonel Leonard Mulamba, the widely respected military governor of Stanleyville, to put together a broadly based "government of national union" by Saturday. This government, he assured the press, would "pass through parliament by acclamation."

The coup has in general been received favorably. The Leopoldville populace appears calm and satisfied--an indication of the extent to which Kasavubu's prestige had slipped even in his own bailiwick. Elsewhere, the popular reaction ranges from joy to indifference.

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Leopoldville politicians are almost unanimous in their approval of the coup, at least for the record.

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Tshombé, who was in danger of arrest under the previous regime, told the American ambassador that he was delighted. *Mobutu has told an official of the US Embassy that he might name Tshombé as minister of economic affairs and possibly as vice premier.

Mobutu was concerned at the gradual leftward drift in the Congo's foreign policy in recent weeks, and his regime will probably be strongly pro-Western. He and

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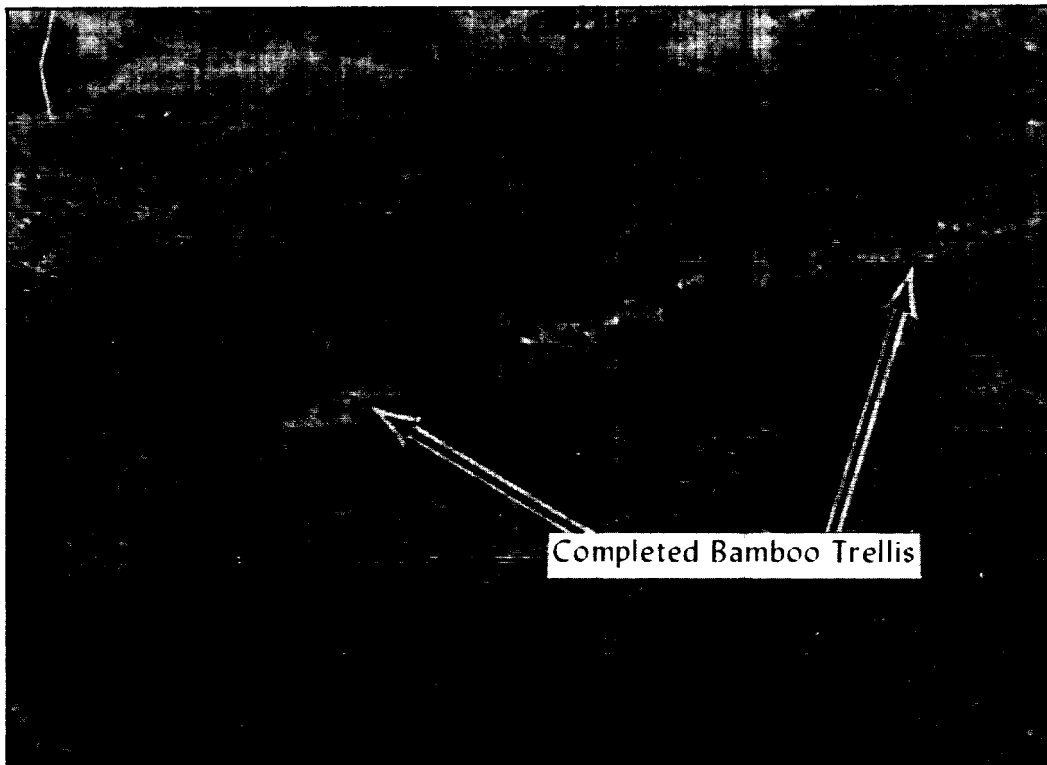
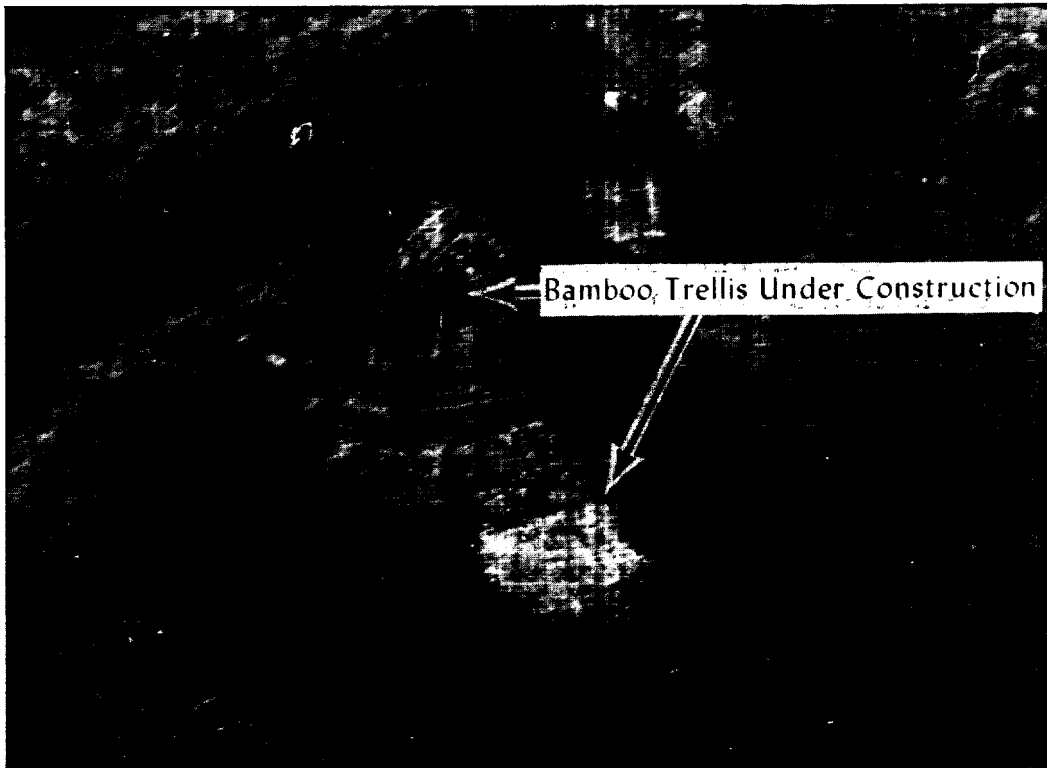
Mulamba are likely to keep the civilian politicians on a short rein, although they will work through the existing constitutional structure as much as possible.

Their administration will be an improvement over the near-anarchy of recent weeks. Corruption will be reduced somewhat, the war against the rebels may be prosecuted more vigorously, and the army may even take some steps to ameliorate the Congo's chronic administrative chaos. Mobutu will not, however, be able to make more than a small dent in the Congo's many problems over the short term.

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LAOS: ROUTE 911

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Laos: The Communists are attempting to camouflage a newly constructed infiltration route in the Lao-tian panhandle.

Recently received photography [redacted] shows that a trellis network was being constructed over exposed sections of Route 911, a new road east of Route 23. [redacted]

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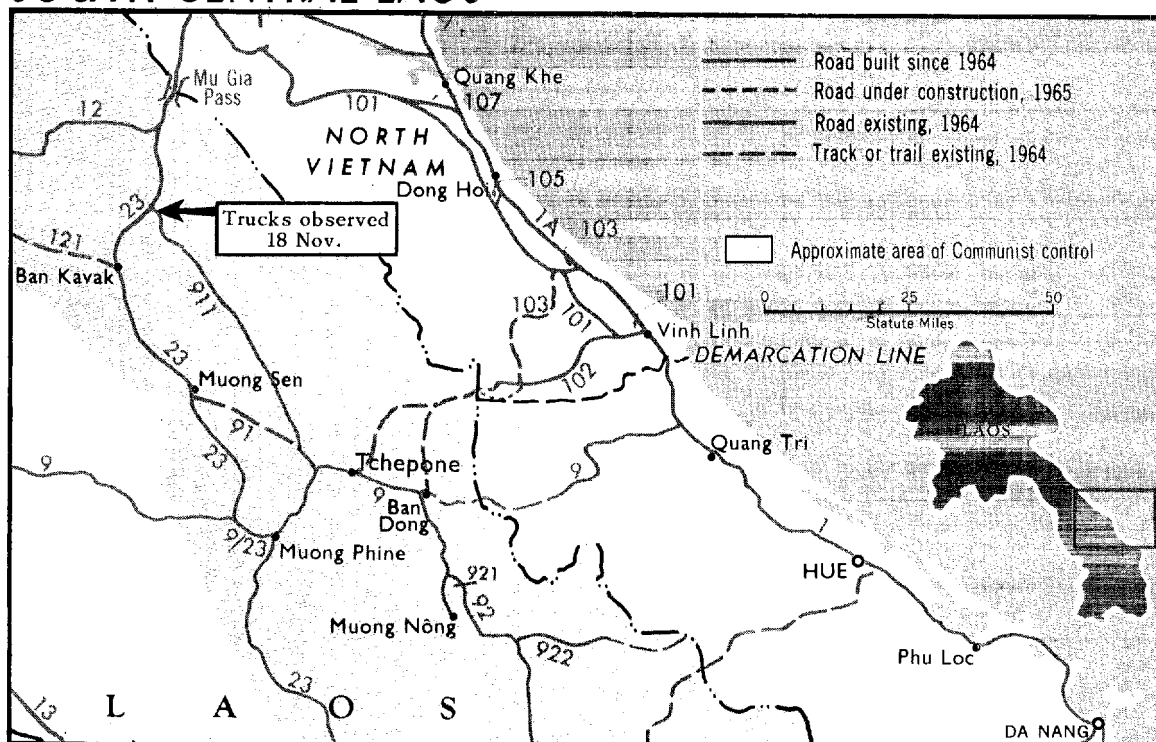
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[redacted] on 18 November some PAVN soldiers and trucks were on Route 911 near the Route 23 junction. This is the first reported use of the new road. [redacted]

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SOUTH CENTRAL LAOS



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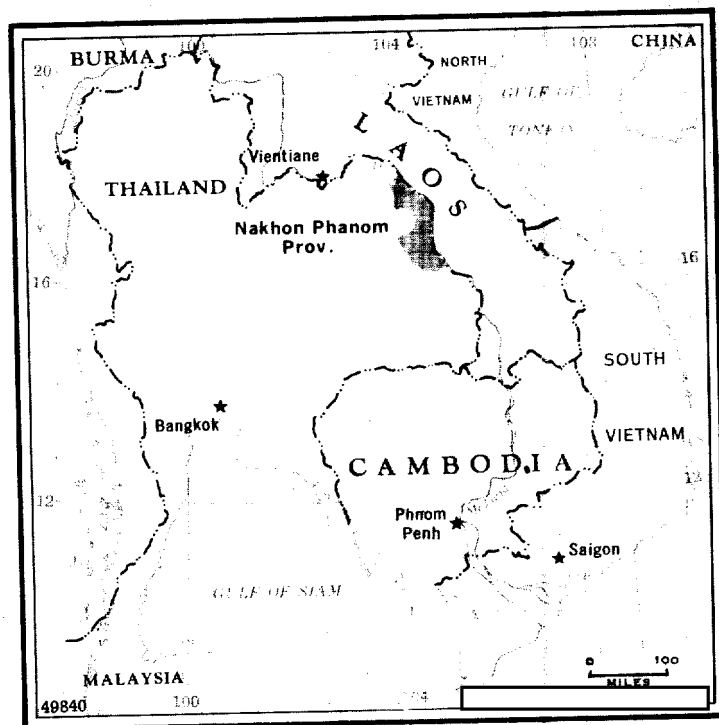
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THAILAND

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Thailand: [The small Communist movement is continuing to lay the groundwork for increased subversive activity in Thailand.]

[The two main Communist front groups are defining their relationship, according to a recently received communiqué of 1 November marking the first anniversary of the older one, the Thai Independence Movement (TIM). The TIM announced that it was joining the Thai Patriotic Front and had accepted its program and political guidance.]

[This arrangement may be related to reported plans of the Communists to switch from defensive to offensive tactics.]

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[A recent broadcast of the clandestine Voice of the Thai People mentioned the "patriotic people's armed units"--the Communists' first public reference to armed insurgents.]

[A Thai police operation in Nakhon Phanom Province in the northeast on 7 November resulted in the first clash with subversives since mid-August. Two subversives were killed and some Communist propaganda material was seized. All five skirmishes this year have resulted from government operations.]

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Rhodesia: [Several African countries are offering troops to Zambia in an apparent attempt to exert pressure on Britain to use military forces in the Rhodesian crisis.]

[] Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Egypt, Congo (Brazzaville), and Guinea have made such offers. President Nkrumah of Ghana has ordered his chief of staff to prepare plans to send 1,200 to 1,400 Ghanaian troops in case Zambia requests them. The OAU's Committee on Rhodesia has endorsed these offers.]

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[The east African governments and Zambian President Kaunda apparently hope the specter of African troops will encourage the UK to send its own troops to Zambia first. [] Nkrumah believes the African troops must trigger fighting with Rhodesia in order to force the UK to intervene militarily. Kaunda is unlikely to accept African troops until all hope of British military support is exhausted.]

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[In Rhodesia, African nationalists in Bulawayo staged their first successful strike since independence when an estimated 60 percent of the workers stayed away from their jobs on 23 November. The next day, however, nearly all workers returned following employers' warnings that absentee employees would be immediately dismissed.]

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[British Prime Minister Wilson has taken steps to avoid forcing the Conservative Party leadership to decide on continuing to support the government's Rhodesian policy. In the face of the Conservative "shadow cabinet's" warnings against the implications of the UN Security Council's resolution calling for a total trade boycott and oil embargo, Wilson expressed his own doubts about the practicability of such measures unless there was general agreement among the countries principally concerned in enforcing them.] []

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UK - West Germany: [The recent talks in London between Foreign Ministers Stewart and Schroeder evidently failed to narrow significantly the differences between Britain and West Germany over NATO nuclear sharing.]

[The British minister stressed that closer allied consultation on the use, targeting, and deployment of nuclear weapons should have the "highest priority" and that the question of a collective nuclear force should merely be kept "under review." Although Stewart mentioned the Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF) proposal as the basis for such a force, he made clear that London is thinking in terms of the present weapons systems rather than adding on any new weapons. Schroeder, for his part, re-emphasized that Germany would not be satisfied with any purely consultative arrangement and that its nuclear requirements focus on participation in an actual weapons system. He insisted that the Germans still feel a need for a mixed-manned force, preferably a surface fleet. Schroeder showed no interest in Stewart's suggestion that V-bombers could be mixed-manned or that Germany should commit its nuclear-capable F104 Starfighter airplanes and Pershing tactical missiles.]

[In reporting to US officials on the talks, some British officials profess to see considerable German "flexibility" on nuclear sharing. On the other hand, a German report that Stewart favors the ANF as the basis for allied consultations on nuclear sharing suggests that the German ambassador in London misinterpreted the British position.]

[The fact that neither side delved into details of their differences is a further indication that both Bonn and London are looking to the coming Erhard and Wilson talks with President Johnson to clarify the issues on the nuclear problem.]

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Dominican Republic: Garcia Godoy is slowly moving ahead with his plans to give his provisional government a more moderate image.

The President quietly removed leftist Attorney General Morel Cerda on 23 November, replacing him with Gustavo Gomez Ceara, a moderate with an undistinguished background, who appears to be a supporter of Balaguer. Two impartial candidates will reportedly soon be appointed to vacancies on the commission which will supervise the forthcoming election. The President has said he is also planning the removal of his press secretary, Franklin Dominguez, who was closely linked with Caamano's "constitutionalists."

*Garcia Godoy has told the embassy that he has directed the new attorney general to remove three extreme leftist judges from office. In addition, the President stated he plans promptly to abolish the judicial police now that Gomez has taken office.

Defense Minister Rivera and navy chief Jimenez, probably feeling pressure from their subordinates, had gone so far as to threaten to resign if he did not act soon. The military chiefs clearly expect something in return for having supported the President during the recent right-wing uprising.

The removal of Morel will probably calm the military and reassure moderates and conservatives that the regime intends to pursue impartial policies during the rest of its term in office.

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NOTES

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USSR-US: The Soviets' handling of the case of US citizen Newcomb Mott emphasized Moscow's intention both to avoid an undue provocation of the US at this time as well as any excessive display of moderation. Although the Soviet prosecutor had requested that Mott be sentenced to two and one-half years in a labor camp for illegally entering the USSR from Norway last September, the court sentenced him to 18 months. The Soviet judge also ruled that the almost three months that Mott served in jail awaiting trial would count toward completion of the sentence. In addition, Soviet propaganda media gave minimal attention to the incident.

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